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Bi-weekly Newsletter

>> Goodbye to the USAID Participant Training Program, Good Luck to Bulgarian Center for Development and Training



Ambassador Beyrle receives a certificate from World Learning's Country Director Matt Brown

The USAID Participant Training Program held its formal closing event on the evening of July 9, in the Arena di Serdica hotel, bringing together numerous USG partners and implementers, Government of Bulgaria and civil society representatives, businesses and academia who have collaborated or benefited from the program in one way or another. Since 1993 the program has trained more than 4,000 Bulgarians in support of USAID technical assistance programs, with training and workshops taking place in Bulgaria, the U.S. and more than 30 other countries all over the world.

The Participant Training program is one of the longest-running and most popular USAID programs, and due to its cross-cutting and customer oriented nature it has reached out many parts of the country by providing targeted trainings to local leaders and partners. It is a program that is both diverse and versatile, and has proven to be the indispensable complementary piece to the mosaic of various aspects of the technical assistance portfolio.

At the event, Ambassador Beyrle, Mission Director Michael Fritz and the World learning Program Director Colin Davis who had opened the local office back in 1993 joined several others in congratulating the PTP team for its achievements and wishing the best of luck to the program's legacy organization, the Bulgarian Center for Development and Training.❖



USAID/Bulgaria Program Officer Ivanka Tzankova (left) and Training Officer Nora Ovcharova (right) pose happily with their awards from World Learning acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

>> NGOs Obtain Tools for More Effectively Managing Finances

On July 11, lecturers from the regional USAID Financial Management Center in Budapest organized a financial management tools seminar for local NGO partners, with assistance from the USAID Participant Training Program. The pilot seminar incorporated feedback obtained during the NGO Financial Sustainability reviews conducted by the USAID Mission. The seminar provided a short overview of accounting, including basic accounting terms and principles. NGOs were trained to use a basic financial management tool.



USAID Regional Control Officer Chuck Szkalak makes his presentation.



The tool, designed as a simple spreadsheet, starts with the opening balance and allows the user to enter basic transactions over a period of time, which feeds into an income statement and a closing balance sheet. The tool was praised by participants as extremely useful for meeting organizations' needs for financial management, cash flow monitoring, and project planning, as well as conforming to the reporting requirements of donors. Participants practiced the model with two case studies, and a few even dared to immediately test it on their financial records.

After the pilot issue of the workshop, the Financial tools seminar will be further customized to meet the needs of specific target groups of organizations and will be offered to other USAID partnering organizations in the CEE region, and potentially worldwide. ❖

>> A Swinging Farewell to the Judicial Strengthening Initiative



Celebrating court partners are among the more than one hundred attendees at the JSI Close-out party. Chairperson Tatyana Alexandrova of the Vratsa District Court – a USAID Model Court (left), and Supreme Judicial Council Member Panayot Genkov (second from left), with Sofia Regional Court Chairperson Ivan Kolev (right).

Swing music and the stately gardens of the Lozenets Residence provided the backdrop for the final celebration of the USAID Judicial Strengthening Initiative (JSI) on July 12 in Sofia. The event gathered leaders of the Bulgarian judiciary, NGOs, journalists, and other program participants and supporters. Speakers included Ambassador Beyrle, Ivan Grigorov, Chair of the Supreme Court of Cassation, and Konstantin Penchev, Chair of the Supreme Court of Administration.

"While we say goodbye to some Americans who have worked in Bulgaria, I view today's event more as a new beginning," said Ambassador Beyrle. "With Bulgaria's EU entry and the graduation of the USAID program, the American-Bulgarian partnership enters a new phase." He praised the increasingly transparent work of the Supreme Judicial Council and urged all Bulgarian courts to adopt practices of the USAID Model Courts, including hosting websites and establishing public information centers.

JSI staff nominated Legal Advisor Presiana Manolova to speak on their behalf at the event. Manolova will chair the Managing Board of a newly established NGO that will focus on continuing legal reform initiatives, the Program for the Development of the Judicial System. ❖



The Close-out reception of the centerpiece USAID Rule of Law project was marked by JSI Director Ken Stuart receiving honors from the Supreme Judicial Council.

As the JSI closes down later this summer, Judge Stuart will have shepherded the USAID Judicial Development Project and then the Judicial Strengthening Initiative for five years. The JDP and JSI team have left many legacies, including the National Institute of Justice, 30 Model Courts, and a new Department of Court Administration at the SJC – approved in July to continue the Model Courts and Courts in Partnership program into the future.



>> English Teachers Train to Work with Civil Servants in Underserved Locations



Novice teachers from Vetevo, Sinemorets and Varna use role playing during training to demonstrate good teaching practices

Fourteen new English teachers from small municipalities throughout the country trained intensively for three weeks to work with personnel in municipal administrations, where the need for English study is still great. The selected teachers were nominated by their municipalities. The teacher trainees taught 90 “practice students” recruited from the staff of the Agency for Social Assistance, other state agencies, and social NGOs. Each student received at least 14 hours of free English lessons.

The course materials were from the Qualification in Language Teaching of the School for International Training (SIT) and was conducted by licensed SIT trainers. The organizers were the USAID Participant Training Program and

its legacy organization, the Bulgarian Center for Development and Training (BCDT). The Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform played a key role in recruiting potential teachers from its networks. BCDT is seeking licensing from SIT to offer similar courses more frequently, and expects to offer a course for Roma English teachers later this year. ❖